Coordinates: 47°25′22″N 9°22′35″E

Abbey library of Saint Gall

The **Abbey Library of Saint Gall** (German: *Stiftsbibliothek*) is a significant medieval monastic library located in St. Gallen, Switzerland. In 1983, the library, as well as the Abbey of St. Gall, were designated a World Heritage Site, as "an outstanding example of a large Carolingian monastery and was, since the 8th century until its secularisation in 1805, one of the most important cultural centres in Europe".[1]

Abbey library of St. Gallen

Location	St. Gallen
Coordinates	47°25′22″N 9°22′35″E
Type	archive art museum library memory institution monastic library
Heritage designation	class A Swiss cultural property of national significance
Part of	Abbey of Saint Gall
Country	Switzerland
Website	www.stiftsbibliothek.ch (http://www.stiftsbibliothek.ch)

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History and architecture

The library was founded by Saint Othmar, founder of the Abbey of St. Gall. During a fire in 937, the Abbey was destroyed, but the library remained intact.[2] The library hall, designed by the architect Peter Thumb in a Rococo style, was constructed between 1758–67.[3] A Greek inscription above the entrance door, *psyché iatreion*, translates as "apothecary of the soul".

Collections

The library collection is the oldest in Switzerland, and one of earliest and most important monastic libraries in the world. The library holds almost 160,000 volumes, with most available for public use. In addition to older printed books, the collection includes 1650 *incunabula* (books printed before 1500), and 2100 manuscripts dating back to the 8th through 15th centuries; among the most notable of the latter are items of Irish, Carolingian, and Ottonian production. These codices are held inside glass cases, each of which is topped by a carved cherub offering a visual clue as to the contents of the shelves below; for instance, the case of astronomy-related materials bears a cherub observing the books through a telescope.[4] Books published before 1900 are to be read in a special reading room.[5] The manuscript B of the *Nibelungenlied* is kept here.

A virtual library has been created to provide broader access to the manuscripts: *Codices Electronici Sangallenses*. This project has been expanded to include codices from other libraries as well and is operating under the name e-codices. Currently, more than 600 manuscripts from the Abbey library of Saint Gall are available in digital format.

Manuscripts

- Codex Sangallensis 18
- Codex Sangallensis 48
- Codex Sangallensis 878

See also

- Codex Sangallensis (disambiguation), several codices
- List of World Heritage Sites in Europe
- de:Stiftsarchiv St. Gallen

Notes

1. "Abbey of St. Gall" (https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/268). UNESCO World Heritage List. 2019. Retrieved 29 Jan 2019.
2. Murray, Stuart (2009). *The Library: An Illustrated History*. New York, New York: Skyhorse Publishing.
3. "Abbey library of St. Gallen /Stiftsbibliothek (Abbey Library) St. Gallen" (http://www.myswitzerland.com/en/stiftsbibliothek-abbey-library-stgallen.html). 2017-01-19. Retrieved 2016-01-19.
4. "Where to Go". *Berlitz: Switzerland Pocket Guide*. Princeton, NJ: Berlitz Publishing Company. April 1999. pp. 40–41. ISBN 2-8315-7159-6.
5. Murray, Stuart (2009). *The Library: An Illustrated History*. New York, New York: Skyhorse Publishing. p. 288.

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- Beat Matthias von Scarpatetti: *Die Handschriften der Stiftsbibliothek St. Gallen. Codices 547–669. Hagiographica, Historica, Geographica 8.–18. Jahrhundert.* Harrassowitz, Wiesbaden 2003, ISBN 978-3-447-04716-6.
- Beat Matthias von Scarpatetti: *Die Handschriften der Stiftsbibliothek St. Gallen. Codices 1726–1984 (14.–19. Jahrhundert). Beschreibendes Verzeichnis.* Verlag am Klosterhof, St. Gallen 1983, ISBN 978-3-906616-02-5.
- David H. Stam, ed. (2001). *International Dictionary of Library Histories*. Fitzroy Dearborn. ISBN 1579582443.

External links

- e-codices, St. Gallen, Stiffsbibliothek (http://www.e-codices.unifr.ch/en/list/csg)
- Herbermann, Charles, ed. (1913). "Abbey of St. Gall" (https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Catholic_Encyclopedia_(1913)/Abbey_of_St._Gall). *Catholic Encyclopedia*. New York: Robert Appleton Company.
- Stiftsbibliothek Sankt Gallen (http://www.stiftsbibliothek.ch)

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